

Promising Practices for Goal Seven: Safe, Disciplined, and Alcohol- and Drug-Free Schools
Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

The National Education Goals Panel focused on three of its indicators as measures of success on Goal Seven. The Panel focused on those states that had a low percentage of:

- public high school teachers reporting that they were threatened or physically attacked by a student from their school.
- public high school students reporting that they were threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.
- public high school students reporting that they were in a physical fight on school property.

South Dakota is a top-performing state on all three of these Goal Seven indicators. In 1994, 8 percent of teachers reported that they were threatened or physically attacked by a student. Only 5 percent of students reported in 1997 that they had been threatened or injured with a weapon. And only 11 percent of students reported in 1997 that they had been in a physical fight on school property.

- The state is comprised of small school districts. Communities are connected to their schools, and students do not feel anonymous.
- Decisions are made locally, such as one district's efforts to curtail bullying and in others, to promote comprehensive school safety standards.

Vermont is a top-performing state on two indicators. In 1997, student victimization was at 7 percent. Thirteen percent of students reported in 1997 that they had been in a physical fight.

- Schools are small and in close-knit communities.
- The state initiated the Building Effective Supports for Teaching (BEST) program five years ago. The BEST program is designed to help schools develop effective strategies and interventions to anticipate, prevent and respond to behavior problems in schools. BEST offers training grants, conferences, workshops and an annual Summer Institute.

Nevada is the only state that has significantly reduced the percentage of students who engage in physical fights at school, from 20 percent in 1993 to 15 percent in 1997.

- Schools use a wide variety of substance abuse and violence prevention programs. These programs are designed to reach all students, not just those who are "at-risk."
- Safe Harbors, a symposium on safe, disciplined and drug-free schools, was held in Las Vegas. The symposium was designed to bring together members of all areas of the community to identify problems and promising strategies for prevention.

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